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Members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee:

The City of Meriden is currently in the midst of renovating into like-new, our two high schools. We are fortunate enough to have gotten generous funding from the State of Connecticut and the participation of some great construction firms. We are also undergoing other smaller construction activities, as well. The vulnerable financial condition of our state and city has heightened our concern for precious limited taxpayer funds.

Prevailing wage legislation is one state mandate on cities that needs to be updated, and I respectfully submit this letter to the Labor and Public Employees Committee, in support of making this legislation more fair and to reflect current economic realities. Indeed, reasonable adjustments to the prevailing wage thresholds would not jeopardize or impact traditional, larger-scale projects, such as Meriden's two high school buildings, but would jumpstart certain other local projects and create efficiencies in a time when property taxpayers need them the most.

Not updated since 1991, the thresholds that trigger prevailing wages need to be adjusted to reflect current realities. I ask this Committee to seriously consider raising renovation projects threshold to \$400,000 and raising new construction projects threshold to \$1,000,000.

Furthermore, I'm not so sure the current law has been properly applied when calculating prevailing wages. I ask this Committee to review this aspect of the law, by determining whether periodic surveys have been done to average union and non-union wages in order to establish prevailing wages.

No one wants skilled tradespeople to be underpaid, so prevailing wage legislation does have a role to play in our state, and we must acknowledge that much has changed since 1991; now this legislation must also be changed.

Respectfully


Manuel A. Santos